**TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS**

**Terrestrial ecosystems are ones that are based on land, like forests or grasslands**. Each ecosystem has plants and animals specifically designed to survive in its environment. The environment that an animal lives in is called its habitat.

**Canada has many different types of terrestrial ecosystems, such as the Boreal forests, the Prairies, and the Arctic Tundra**. The plants and animals that live in these areas possess different abilities that help them to survive. For example, hares exist in many parts of Canada. The majority of them are brown in colour, but Arctic hares turn white in the winter. This allows them to avoid predators by hiding in the snow.

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| Look at how well each rabbit blends with its surroundings. | |

Terrestrial ecosystems are often defined by their climate. Those with moderate, warm climates can often support a wider range of species than those with cold, harsh climates.

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| The harsh climate of the tundra prevents tall trees from surviving. | Boreal ecosystems are rich with life. They support many types of trees, grasses, and bushes. These in turn support many types of animals, such as rabbits, deer, moose, and bears. The abundance of animal life supports other predatory animals such as wolves and foxes. The Arctic Tundra, on the other hand, has a harsh climate. There are very few trees and those that do manage to grow are very small. There are few larger animals, since there is less for them to eat. |

Terrestrial ecosystems have a carrying capacity as well. If this balance is disturbed, then the ecosystem will not sustain itself. There is an island in the Niagara River known as Navy Island. No one lives on it any more and you can only get to it by boat. About 50 years ago, several deer were released on the island and since there were no wolves and hunting was not allowed, the population quickly grew to a size that the island could not support. The deer began to starve, so the government had to relocate some of them.